

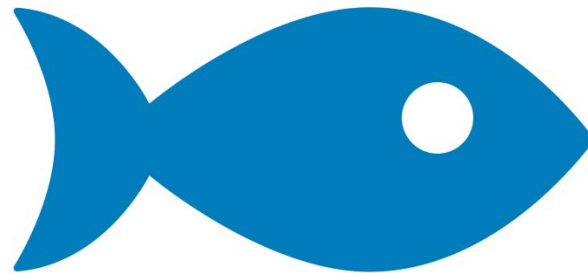


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# Oceans: Deciding to Act “Life Below Water” Sustainable Development Goal 14

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# 14 LIFE BELOW WATER



# Refreshing thinking on strategic risk



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Nichols experience is that for any governing body to become truly risk competent:

- Risk management must become more central to strategic control, and have legitimate authority to challenge plans and the power to shape strategy.
- The primary focus of risk management must be the direct support and facilitation of good decisions. Some areas have useful principles embedded internationally, for example ALARP Keeping risks “As Low as Reasonably Practicable” in the nuclear field.
- Any new approach to risk must be developed by taking account of the unique history, culture and strategy of the organisations involved.
- After aligning culture and approach, organisations start to control risk with increased confidence.

This applies to Sustainable Development Goals as much as a business or national project.

The lack of agreement to new actions at the G7 this Summer, despite huge efforts by Canada, demonstrates the point.

# Overfishing



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# A “Stern” review for the Oceans



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In order to decide where to apply resources and focus political and donor energy, we need a common currency so as to get a sense of scale and of the relative urgency of the managing the risks ahead. This was the climate change challenge 10 years ago.

There are three components:

1. For the Group of Experts on Risk Management to show how to approach risk
2. Scientific colleagues to show how to measure the wide range and scale of damage to the oceans.
3. To assess the costs from both action and inaction in order to give some ability to prioritise and to judge in what sequence the main risks should be engaged; and to speak the language of Finance Ministries.

# Climate change may have most impact



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# How might SDG 14 best be engaged 1?



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A similar methodological problem was encountered in achieving action on climate change. This was one driver for the Stern Review.

This team used broad economic measures – specifically the cost of inaction compared to the cost of prevention – to stimulate international political action.

Behind the cost figures was the technique known as “Integrated Assessment Modelling”.

IAM brought together the science on a multiplicity of different potential contributing factors into a unified assessment of what contributed to overall damage or prevention with a simple-to-understand measure: economic cost.

This approach provided a focus and measure that facilitated political decisions culminating in the Paris Agreement.

# How might SDG 14 be prioritised 2: by good science and economics combined



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The SDGs present a particular challenge in presenting multiple objectives under each goal.

Nonetheless a combination of “bow-tie” analysis and Integrated Assessment Modelling, based in sound science, could rank a range of policy options against the 10 grouped objectives. Economic cost is suggested as a familiar measure which readily underpins policy decision-making.

Not perfect because some quality of life factors are hard to cost.

A first attempt based on the available literature for SDG 14 is summarised in the table which follows, as a prelude to workshop discussion of where new science is most badly needed.



# SDG 14 Objectives: Relative Costs of Inaction/Action and Need for Science

Objective	Cost of inaction	Cost of prevention	Governance body	Needs new science
1. Cut pollution	High/Low+QoL	Medium	UN Global	xxx
2. Protect Ecosystems	Medium	Medium	States	Thresholds xxx
3. Avoid Acidification	Very high	Very High	UN/Paris	xxxxx
4. Stop overfishing	Medium	Saving	UN/States	Known
5. Conserve 10% CMs	Medium/QofL	Medium	States	Thresholds xx
6. Fisheries subsidies	Medium	Large saving	States	Known
7. Benefit SIDS	Low	Low	Rich states	xx
8. More S&T	Unknown	Low	ICES	-
9. Artisanal fishers	Local high	Low	Rich states	x
10 Apply intern'l law	High	Medium	ICJ or Consensus	-

# Plastics



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# It's not just economics: think about risks in other SDGs especially to people



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Commercial pressures drive major risks in fishing:

- Companies seek larger catches that are bad for fisheries management
- Fishing in bad weather and remote areas, and concealing positions

As well as depleting fish stocks:

- Results in more accidents to seafarers than any other labour (by a factor of 10 compared to the next high risk occupation)

Overfishing by large Western fleets deprives seafarers in developing countries of their livelihood; a key cause of poverty in coastal areas and even piracy.

We should also think about SDG 5 in promoting safety of people.

# Summary: Get governance right for the big risks to SDG



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We can spend too much effort on low impact risks that we know how to control.

Instead we should focus on the largest risks which threaten SDG outcomes using a cost-benefit approach to prioritise.

Some of the greatest risks in SDG 14 – marine pollution, acidification and over fishing - are the responsibilities of bodies which are driven by different priorities.

A few of the decision-making bodies concerned are within the UN collective system, but are others controlled by member Governments who need to be persuaded and corralled.

SDGs are an opportunity to press for a more coherent and high impact approach – getting the right risk data in front of the right decision-makers.

# For more information



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The Nichols Group specialises in achieving transformational change at the strategic level, often advising decision-makers in Government and helping implement decisions in the field.

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